The People and the Policies

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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THE PRESENT SITUATION AND OUR DUTY

[Speech delivered by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in reply to the welcome and presentation of purse on his seventy-sixth birthday at Ahmedabad on 31-10-'50.]

President of the G. P. C. C., Brothers and Sisters,

I am grateful to you all for the warm and affectionate welcome you have extended to me. In *kaliyuga* 75 years is considered a sufficiently ripe age. The feelings of joy and pleasure that you express on this occasion may be appropriate from the worldly point of view. But I would myself prefer to be 25 years younger today. A man at the age of 50 can do much more work. With the passing of years the thought of the coming end appears and reappears. I have lived with Gandhiji a good part of my life. I have come to understand the value of things. I have learnt to be vigilant. I also realize what I have to do, how far I have to go and what I have to achieve. I am always anxious that I should do nothing which might belie the reputation that I have with you.

I repeat what I said at Indore some time ago: A man earns an address of welcome only after his death. When people feel, after his passing away, that a good man has gone out of the world then he deserves an address. Otherwise, one has to be careful till the end lest one should do something inconsistent with the general opinion. I am trying to fulfil the hopes and expectations that you hold of me to the extent that is possible. I shall strive up to the end and with your love and blessings I hope to succeed.

I have been presented with a cheque of Rs 15 *lakhs*. All those who have collected the money and those who have donated it, know that it will be used in the cause of the country. All of us who joined Gandhiji were made to realize the handicaps of owning property. He made his associates take a vow that they should not own any property. When I joined Gandhiji's army, I also took that pledge. Many people say that "Sardar is a big property owner; that the '*Sardar Griha*' at Bombay belongs to him." I am called the friend of the capitalists. Some believe that I am a friend of the princes. But those who know me intimately know full well that I am a farmer and for many years I have been a friend of the *bhangis* of Ahmedabad, that I am a friend of the cultivators and that if I had not taught the lessons of self-respect, self-reliance and fearlessness to the peasants of Gujarat, the pace of freedom's struggle would not have been accelerated so much and Gujarat would not have forged so much ahead.

India is an agricultural country. If I could go to the villages I would show them where the true welfare of the farmers lies. I would tell them that it would profit them (the farmers of India) to realize that whatever surplus foodstuffs they had with them they should give to their neighbours or their neighbouring provinces even if that means some sacrifice for them. Today a new kind of so-called workers have cropped up; they advise them to demand more money because they are the producers. They ask them to demand their price and not sell their goods at the price fixed by Government. I consider them enemies of the country. Today the country is passing through very difficult times. Many other countries are also in the same condition and have been affected by the last world war. Crores of rupees have been drained away from our country. When India achieved independence it was just like a dead body. The skeleton had just a little life left. There was no blood in it. The conditions in the countries, such as Burma, Malaya, etc., surrounding us were also no better. Our economic unity has been shattered due to the partition of India. It has done us much harm. Foodgrains worth crores of rupees that used to come from Burma, Malaya, Singapore, etc. have stopped coming. Now we have to import them from very distant countries at very heavy cost. Such a heavy drain has fallen on this poor country already groaning under a huge economic burden. It is difficult to free ourselves from these entanglements. Many think that now that we have achieved independence, we have nothing more to do. The Government will do everything needful. The condition of the industries has also deteriorated. The industrialists have nothing to do. Controls have deprived them and the people of the necessity of thinking for themselves. They have everything fixed for them. The middle classes are unemployed. The controls are there and the people have to suffer hardships on that account. Many

intelligent and clever people have no scope for doing any work.

The business class is also in difficulty. This is our present condition. Many blame Government for this state of affairs. I do not say that the Government is not to be blamed. But you must see what this Government is. If you think that the Government is the same old bureaucratic regime, you are mistaken. It is now manned by our own people and they are trying to do what is possible and what they are capable of doing. There is no reason why we should be afraid of it. We should correct their mistakes and advise them. We have not to fight with the present Government as we fought with the previous one. When the struggle for freedom was on, our people used to have love and affection for those who took part in it. But after the attainment of independence, people have become selfish and have been after power. They have abandoned the heroic qualities they formerly exhibited.

We the people of Gujarat are considered businesslike and wise. We should know our duty. We should be ready to undertake work in every sphere of our Swaraj. Much work has to be done. We shall not profit by blaming each other. Your Ministers and officers come here and you meet them. Many persons are angry because of the controls. Bribery and corruption are also there with the controls. But our country is not small; one-fifth of the human race lives here. Moreover we have not got sufficient able and trained officers. It is, therefore, difficult to maintain the controls machinery properly; even God cannot do it. If you want that bribery and corruption should disappear and the black market should vanish, you should take a different course. You can do it if you will make a genuine effort. I receive many letters that I should do this thing and that. I do in my limited field whatever is possible to be done.

In the matter of foodgrains there are lots of difficulties. Shri Kanaiyalal Munshi has written historical novels on Patan, Somnath etc. He can also write one on this scarcity of foodstuffs. He is very energetic and is working very hard. He also celebrated the tree-plantation week. But the work is not so easy. There is a shortage of foodgrains. People will not agree to live on one meal a day or to eat less. As a matter of fact many are actually living on one meal a day. Unfortunately, we did not receive sufficient training for Swaraj. We should share our mutual difficulties and live in peace and amity. We have to manage somehow for a few years. By that time our big irrigation and other projects will be completed. Then there would be no shortage. *Lakhs* of acres of land are lying uncultivated. Floods of rivers affect some parts. There is so much wealth lying hidden in the country's soil. It is not easy to avail ourselves of it immediately. We have not got sufficient technical experts nor the means to exploit and harness these resources. All people cannot be selfless; I do not expect them to be. But they must and can be selfless at least to some extent. If those who are capable and clever devote some of their time and energy to the welfare of others they can do much good to our country. Once we were picketing foreign cloth. Today the condition is reverse. Our cloth goes to Manchester and it goes to other countries and comes back to us after being processed there. They use their intelligence. If we do not add anything to our legacy, it will be exhausted.

Ahmedabad can neither be called a city nor a village. Big cities of the world are of a different type. If you go to Bombay you will get a different idea. In Ahmedabad you will get another idea. Our city is old but all old things are not bad. We should preserve the good old things and leave out those that are bad. We have got the capacity for organization. There is the Maskati Mahajan here and some other associations also doing their work. Such associations are to be found at very few places. They should not only co-operate among themselves, help their own members but should help others in the city, and the people in the surrounding villages. They are trained like that and I hope they will continue to do so. Here the Majur Mahajan and the millowners work together in harmony. If we follow that example it will benefit us in future. The traditions followed by the Majur Mahajan are praiseworthy. Those who have followed other paths have brought harm and disaster.

My message to the farmers of Gujarat on this occasion is: Grow as much foodgrains as you can; do not hoard; do not waste. Give whatever you can to your neighbour. Our deficit is not very much. Only 6 or 7 per cent deficit is there. We can soon make it up. The people of Gujarat are clever and they should do their work with a proper understanding of their duty.

In a way, my life work is completed. The country has achieved independence. Now what remains is its consolidation. Something has been achieved but a great deal remains to be done. Many believed that our administration would break down as soon as the Britishers leave us. But it did not happen. We are doing our work in such a way that we can take our proper place in the comity of nations.

The conditions in the world today are very uncertain. There is no peace-loving country like Tibet in the whole world. Throughout history it has not harmed any one. But now the army of China has entered Tibet. Yet nobody can say anything. The people of Tibet are non-violent but there is no certainty about what the violently disposed persons will do or where they will end. We should therefore be alert and on our guard.

Once the country is stabilized and consolidated, the other difficulties can be removed. We can then see how crores of unemployed people can get work ; how village industries can be developed ; how the industries in the city can prosper. It is not the work of the Government only : the people should also co-operate in this. In spite of all sorts of criticism and uncertainties I feel that everything will be all right in the end. We have intelligent and resourceful people. We have only to work and work with a will.

You have presented a cheque to me. I have no use for it myself. I do not need money. If I need money I know how to get it. It is for your use and you can make such use of it as you like. I only hope that you may be self-reliant and then God will look after you. You do not need leaders. Gandhiji has shown us the way already. If we do our work with co-operation and goodwill our work and worth will shine out.

May God Bless You.

(Translated from Gujarati)

NEW RULE, NEW SCHOOL

In the course of several of his speeches since the Nasik Congress, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has expressed his extreme dissatisfaction with the present system of education. He calls the 'bookish education' now in vogue as utterly worthless, nay, harmful.

If such a statement were made by an ordinary man, it would not be so important even if the speaker were a distinguished thinker. But when it emanates from one who is not only a great leader of the nation but also holds the reins of Government, one would naturally ask the question : "Why does he not change the present system of education if it is so rotten in his view ?" Sardar Patel has answered this question also in his Ahmedabad speech. He has said : "We are not able to introduce the revolutionary changes that we should in education on account of the cobwebs of the past difficulties that cling round us."

It is also clear from his speech that whatever might be the difficulties in the way, the obstructions have to be removed as quickly as possible. I have more than once expressed my views on this matter. If the system of *Nai Talim* placed before us by Gandhiji is not acceptable, and if the evolving of another suitable system should take some time, let all educationists sit together and discover it and till they do so let all schools and colleges be closed. The closure of schools will not cause as much harm to the nation as will be done by continuing the old harmful system.

Once in the course of a discussion with some friends I put the question, "When an old Government changes and yields place to a new, will the old flag continue ?" "Certainly not," was the prompt reply. Then I added, "So also in education. As a new flag follows a new Government, so also new education must follow a new Government. If old education continues in spite of it, we should take it for certain that the Government is new only from without, the inner condition remaining unchanged.

VINOBA

(Translated from Hindi *Sarvodaya* Nov. 1950)

(*Note* : This reminds me of what took place at the Sabarmati Ashram, *circa* 1920. The experiment of the Sabarmati school did not give satisfaction to any one. It was found that though the teachers (i.e. we) were good men individually we did not possess those qualifications which would make for the success of a true national school. So Gandhiji ordered the school to be closed for an indefinite period, retained all the teachers who were prepared to stay, and asked them to train themselves in spinning, weaving, agriculture and also reconsider various subjects of literary study and the system of pedagogy from the standpoint of national education and *ahimsa*.

Of course, there is the apprehension that Vinobaji's suggestion — which I too put forth some months ago — also comes within the purview of Shri Vallabhbhai's remark that this too is a cobweb, which we cannot easily get our release from. When several 20th century educationists meet together, they might agree to differ on most points including the one of closing the present institutions !

But this seems to be a necessity. Nothing else would happen, if there were chaos for a few years. Willy nilly we would have to submit to suspension of these activities. If we can do so boldly and consciously, to prepare ourselves for a new life, a few years spent in self-preparation will give us better results afterwards. The worm does not change into a beautiful butterfly until it shuts itself in a cocoon for several days. Apparently it looks as good as dead, but is intensely alive and evolving inside. So, too, education will not cease to evolve during the period of its apparent suspension. But it requires boldness, faith and earnestness of the heroes of political and religious revolutions. — K. G. M.)

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Name & Place	Rs	as	ps
Shree Zaverchand T. Bhimani, Ahmedabad	201	0	0
A Gentleman, Ahmedabad	10	0	0
Shree Manibhai H. Parikh, Ahmedabad	5	0	0
Shree Dahyalal K. Soni, Patan	3	0	0
Shee Budhalal L. Shah, Unjha	10	0	0
Visitors to Mahalakshmi Temple through Shree N. J. Dave, Bombay	4,327	0	0
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Shree Saibaba Mandal, Ahmedabad	28	8	0
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HARIJAN

Nov. 25 1950

THE PEOPLE AND THE POLICIES

The readers will find elsewhere Shri Harekrishna Mahtab's reply to Shri Kumarappa's article "A Blashphemy", published in *Harijan* of 14th October, 1950. The article was published with my approval; in fact, it was written at my request. It represents the common views of several of us here at Wardha, and I believe, of constructive workers elsewhere.

That Shri Mahtab understands Gandhiji as much as Shri Kumarappa or, for the matter of that, any one else, may be readily conceded. It is not the point at issue. What is complained of is that he represented Gandhiji in a distorted manner, and he did this as an important Minister of the Central Government, and under circumstances in which he could not have been replied to by any one in the audience (even if one qualified to do so was present), about the manner in which he represented the so-called Gandhian principles of non-interference by Government and its non-responsibility for shortages, famines, evils of mal-distribution etc. This is what is charged as "misusing his powers to suit his own ends" — the ends being the justification not of controls merely as such, but the particular system of controls obstinately pursued by the Government.

Shri Mahtab confesses that "Government have so far not done anything for developing self-sufficiency", and naively adds, "till this is done..........there must be control of distribution." Why has the Government not done *anything* till now? Who is responsible for it? When will the stage arrive, when it could be said that "now the Government has done, or almost done, or begun it"? He said in his speech that the Congress Party had not accepted the principle of self-sufficiency. If that is the case, it is a revelation. Why does the Government, then, speak of attaining self-sufficiency in food, cloth, sugar and so on? Why does it not say to the people "Do not worry about less growth of food. We shall bring food from any corner of the world. Only give us more cotton, ground-nut, sugar-cane, tobacco, tea, coffee etc."?

And when Gandhiji spoke of decontrol and non-interference, did he use these words in the sense in which Shri Mahtab wants us to understand them? Did he say that the Government was not expected to promote the social and economic advance of the country both directly and indirectly? It is well known that Gandhiji advocated nationalization of certain industries, promotion of certain others as a State policy, and non-interference with industries of certain other types. His programme of production was organically integrated with the problem of distribution of goods as well as profits. As Shri Kumarappa pointed out, did not Gandhiji want prohibition, banning of *vanaspati*, rice-mills, oil-mills etc., control of mill competition against *khadi*, prevention of fraud in the manufacture of *khadi*, removal of Harijans' disabilities by legislation and so on? There were scores of subjects in which active interference and control by Government was sought by Gandhiji himself. Indeed, controls will be necessary for the promotion of the Gandhian programme also, but they will be controls in the interest of the poor and the downtrodden, not in the interest of the rich and the war machine. It may be conceded that even these controls would have their appropriate counterparts of corruption. But that corruption will be of a far different type from the present one, and on a very minor scale both in its extent and magnitude. It will be controllable by the smallest local Government operating, and failure to do so would, in his scheme, be injurious to its own existence.

In fact it was and is unnecessary to refer to Gandhiji's views. Even when he was alive, he gave every one complete freedom of thought. Now, he cannot interfere with our policies. We must all form our policies, without involving him.

Shri Mahtab said in his speech that "the Congress Party" had not accepted Gandhiji's principle of self-sufficiency, and so "the people" could not ask for decontrol. How does the second proposition follow from the first? When did the Congress Party publicly renounce the principle of self-sufficiency in food, cloth and other essentials of life? And when were "the people" asked to ratify the renouncement? Besides, is the system of controls now operating so devised as to ensure fair distribution of commodities and wealth? We submit that it does the very opposite. It is the very system of controls and all that accompanies it, which is responsible for killing all incentive to grow more food, concealing the stocks, resorting to black-market practices, adulteration of articles, and making the rich richer and roll in luxuries, while the poor get poorer and starve in the neighbourhood of plenty. The villages are as ruthlessly exploited as in the days of the East India Company, when India was governed for making her an exporter of raw materials to Great Britain and the importer and consumer of the finished products of that country. The same exploitation is now carried on under the name of controlled distribution, the only difference being that the cities and large industries of India herself have stepped into the shoes of Lancashire and the British manufacturers.

This is not the whole charge against the Central Government. It is actually sabotaging not only the Gandhian programme but also the Congress-sanctioned nation-building programmes of States, by dictating anti-Congress policies from above. It has so set its face against prohibition that no State now has the courage to push it zealously; and the Bombay and Madras Governments, who have shown the temerity to adhere to it, find opposition not from the people, but from the Cenral Government itself, its armed forces and its Judicial and Executive officers. So, too, the Central Government sabotaged the Prakasam Ministry's anti-cloth-mill policy, with the result, that the Ministries, which succeeded the Prakasam Ministry, not having the courage to reject the *khadi* scheme forthright spent money on it to show, as it were, to the world that self-sufficiency through *khadi* was not a practical proposition. Instead of promoting *khadi*, they have almost spent money to kill it. The policies in respect of sugar, *vanaspati*, textiles, tobacco, transport, etc. are, each one, like calculated steps for preventing the villages from ever getting a chance of becoming prosperous.

No doubt, all this shows that the Congress Party does not accept even the Congress programme, but it does not show that the people have accepted the Congress Party's policies.

Very curiously, Shri Mahtab asserts that it is the traders who want decontrol, and not the consumers. It may be perfectly true that the traders also want the lifting of controls. But we are prepared to accept his challenge of taking the verdict of consumers pure and simple on the present system of controls.

Shri Kumarappa cannot be blamed if he uses strong language on matters which affect the daily life and living of millions of the Indian poor. I do not agree that he has used any abusive expression in the article in question. This article itself may be regarded as a strong one. But I think I would not be right if I avoided saying the right thing, although a great many of the members of the Central Government (including Shri Mahtab himself) and its Planning Commission are dear personal friends. It is unpleasant to do so. But we would be false friends, indeed, if we did not say our emphatic 'nay', when 'nay' was the only right response to a wrong proposition of a friend.

Wardha, 13-11-'50 K. G. MASHRUWALA

Shri Ramana Maharshi on Contraception

Readers of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur's article on Birth Control Methods in *Harijan* of 11-11-'50 might be interested to know the opinion of Shri Ramana Maharshi on contraception. He said, "It is like attempting to put out a conflagration by pouring kerosene oil over it."

Madras, 13-11-'50 S.

A CHALLENGE

New Delhi,
26th October, 1950

Dear Sir,

I have read the article entitled "A Blasphemy" written by Shri J. C. Kumarappa, published in the *Harijan* of the 14th October, 1950. I am not surprised at it because by now I have more or less become accustomed to the tone and temper of Shri Kumarappa. But one thing I do not understand how by expressing an opinion, however wrong it may appear to be, I have "misused my powers to suit my own ends". With all humility, I may claim that I understand Gandhiji as much as Shri Kumarappa. Two or three sentences of his article are really worth consideration. I agree with Shri Kumarappa that Government have so far not done anything for developing self-sufficiency. Till it is done and till self-sufficiency is achieved, Shri Kumarappa's own logic shows that there must be control of distribution. Cloth and yarn will not cease being dumped when the control is lifted and free market is allowed. In order to stop dumping, control will be necessary and in that control, there is likelihood of various kinds of corruption also. In any scheme, either Gandhian or otherwise, one cannot get away from control. Dollar exchange is not so much necessary for importing *vanaspati* as for importing foodgrains. However much Shri Kumarappa may try to reduce my argument to absurdity, the fact stands that, situated as we are, some control is necessary. It is the traders who want decontrol and not the consumers. Since the traders are vociferous and many are ready to advocate their cause, their voice seems to predominate, but the dumb millions want control in the sense that their requirements should reach them at a reasonable price. It will be better if Shri Kumarappa addresses himself to the traders whom he represents and call upon them to treat the consumers fairly and thus enable the control to be lifted. I would ask Shri Kumarappa to come with me and approach the consumers and take their verdict on the point.

But one thing I do not understand how it is necessary that strong and abusive language should be used to make out a case. If we meet consumers at any particular place, I think I shall be able to explain my own view-point as politely as possible, and I am sure the consumers will appreciate my view-point in spite of the hard words used on the other side by Shri Kumarappa.

Yours faithfully,
H. K. MAHTAB

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THE PLACE OF SELF-SPINNING

II

Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju's Criticism and Reply

1. *Dearness of Khadi*: In reality there has been no recent change in the relative position of the situation in respect of dearness. The present very low value of the rupee gives the wrong impression that there has been a change for the worse. In some places the spinning wage is about 8 as. for 8 hours' efficient work and, in others, 6 as. only. Having regard to the all-round dearness prevailing, even the 8 as. rate is much lower than the rate of 3 as. fixed by the A. I. S. A. in 1938, when it adopted the policy of advancing towards a living wage for spinning.

2. *Doubts about Self-sufficiency Programme*: Dr Katju's doubts about the prospects of the self-sufficiency drive are not unwarranted. But it will be best to deal with this subject at the end.

3. *Economic Use of Idle-hours and Cost of Self-spun Khadi*: Dr Katju seems to think that the argument of saving money by utilizing idle hours has ceased to be valid now. As a matter of fact, having regard to the then cheap prices of mill-cloth there was no saving of money even in the past, if one had to buy slivers and pay weaving charges etc. as out-of-pocket expenses.

Dr Katju's calculations are approximately correct. If cotton is available locally, the cost is likely to be a little less. If the yarn be good enough, which is usually so when one spins for oneself, weaving charges will be less by a rupee or two. Bleaching is not necessary. So the out-of-pocket expense for self-sufficiency *khadi* may be taken to be almost the same as that of mill-cloth. However, one factor has to be taken into consideration. Having regard to the quality of mill-cloth now available to the customer in the retail market, the self-made *khadi* is likely to bear at least 25 per cent more of wear and tear. But after making all these allowances Shri Katju's argument still holds good. We may take into consideration one more aspect also. If cotton is grown on one's own farm, or in the home yard, and if all the processes up to twisting the yarn and making the warp which are simple enough could be done by oneself, out-of-pocket charges will have to be paid only in respect of weaving. The weaving of twisted yarn, too, can be done by oneself as shown below. How far this is implementable on a large scale is a factor which will require consideration. *

* Shri Krishnadas Gandhi, Secretary, A.I.S.A., has urged an additional point, which deserves consideration. He grants, for the sake of argument, that the cost of 10 yards of *khadi* is Rs 8-8-0 + 100 hours of spinning labour, but says that the statement that the cost price of 10 yards of mill-cloth is Rs 7 only is not quite correct. It is Rs 7 *plus* value of 100 hours of labour compulsorily wasted on account of unemployment caused by the mill. The assessment of mill-cloth at Rs 7 would be correct, if these 100 hours were alternatively employed in remunerative work. When this is not so, its waste is a personal as well as a national loss. — Ed.

4. *Mill-cloth No Longer Foreign*: This raises a fundamental issue. The question is, that in the matter of articles of primary need, whether the economic order based on centralized large-scale industries will be conducive to the welfare of the teeming millions of rural Bharat or that based on decentralized village industries? Gandhiji was emphatic that the latter alone should prevail in India. The same is the opinion of the school of thought represented by the spinning wheel. Many people, however, though they are in favour of *khadi*, do not seem inclined to control the textile industry of the country in its favour. Should they not seriously consider the point whether the spinning wheel and the mill can go together? Is there any half-way house between them?

5. *Alternative Employments*: This argument is not resisted. It has never been the policy of the A.I.S.A. to ask the poor villager to take to hand-spinning if there is any other remunerative work open to him. In fact none does so. But the fact is that other cottage industries are not available to all and at all times and places for the villagers who would like to work at them. Moreover there is hardly any of them left, which is immune from competition by factory-made articles of a similar kind.

6. *Question of Leisure*: If mere arithmetical calculations were to lead us anywhere, we might say that two members of a family of five, sparing on an average daily one hour each, may spin yarn enough for 72 square yards for the year. The old and infirm can give much more time. Children and students can also contribute much. The upper middle- and rich-class people of the towns and cities and to some extent of the villages also can and should buy *khadi* for which full maintenance wages have been paid to the spinner. But all these calculations presuppose a much greater development of industrious habits, character and sentiments than we have. Hence for practical purposes it becomes useless to make these calculations.

Whatever yarn is spun at present for wages is spun only by women. They do it in addition to their other domestic and remunerative work. If men and boys also were to take to it the yarn produced would be enough for our immediate purposes. It is not impossible to invent and to bring into vogue a spinning wheel which will increase the output of yarn to a large extent. If we contemplate a far-off complete self-sufficiency in cloth through *khadi* it should not be impossible, in course of time, to secure a simple mechanism, which will give adequate quantity of yarn for one's own use, and at the same time maintain its basic character of a home industry.

The A. I. S. A. does not ask the poor wage-earner alone to take to self-sufficiency. Rather its appeal is specially to those that stand for *khadi* and have accepted its implications, specially members of the Congress, which has made its wearing compulsory for its qualified members.

The A. I. S. A. came to the conclusion that spinning for wage alone can no longer advance the cause of *khadi*. The reasons for the same are given in detail in the book चरखासंघका नवसंस्करण (New Orientation of the A. I. S. A.).

It is not that the Association deprecates spinning for wages. It has merely transferred part of that work to certified institutions and is itself concentrating on the self-sufficiency programme, because it thinks that this is absolutely essential for further progress of *khadi* along with all that it implies and symbolizes; namely, a non-violent social and economic order based on regional self-sufficiency for the primary needs of life. For this it must strive hard towards self-sufficiency in cloth. Having regard to the fact that, for the time being, the way to this has to be made against heavy odds, the A.I.S.A. is the only institution which can tackle it and is under an obligation to do it.

7. *The Place of Khadi*: The idea of connecting *khadi* with some political or social movement is welcome. I would welcome some definite suggestion.

Shri Katju would like to limit the scope of *khadi* as a means of providing a supplementary source of income to the unemployed in rural areas. This, of course, depends on a market for it. It is evidently very limited and is progressively going down. Even if the sales reached the target of one crore rupees worth of *khadi*, the part of it which will reach the artisans will be about Rs 60 *lakhs*. It is an item of poor value for the thirty-five crores of population of Bharat. Further our Swaraj Government must be held responsible to do all such relief work. Should there be any need of the A.I.S.A. for this purpose? And how long are these poor villagers to depend on the charity of *khadi* buyers in free India?

During the last thirty years we experienced several ups and downs in the *khadi* market. Only those that work amongst the artisans know the agony they have to undergo when they have to stop providing work to them, when large stocks accumulate. Only recently, the Gandhi Ashram of U. P. had painfully to curtail its *khadi* production by two-thirds. How long would the production of commercial *khadi* survive in such a precarious condition?

8. *Improvement of Khadi Technique*: The suggestions made in the last para are very important. The A.I.S.A. is wide awake to the need of lowering the cost of *khadi*, which has to be paraphrased to mean that all the processes that go to make *khadi* should be capable of being done in as short a time as possible. The Association has been endeavouring incessantly, on the one hand, to invent and introduce simple and cheap implements and, on the other, to make them yield more output. The bamboo *charkhas*, devised originally by Shri Satishbabu of the Khadi Pratishthan, are plying at Sevagram and other places and now bamboo looms have also been introduced in the Khadi Vidyalaya of Sevagram each costing about Rs 10 only. The same loom made from timber costs about Rs 75. Efforts are also being made to induce the spinners and weavers to improve the quality of the yarn and cloth. But those who have worked among them know very well how very difficult it is to persuade them to take to new methods. In order to reduce the cost of weaving stress is now being laid on doubling and twisting the yarn. This process can be carried on along with the spinning itself by the addition of a simple contrivance to the ordinary wheel. The charges for weaving twisted yarn will not be more than 2 annas per square yard. Classes are being conducted to teach the weaving of twisted yarn to lay men and women. It can be learnt in about 6 weeks. Experiments are being carried on in respect of a spinning wheel which, if successful, promises to more than double the present speed of spinning. I feel that if Government were to earnestly encourage and undertake through their own departments research work in this line, we may get the requisite instrument ere long. The two-spindle Magan *charkha* is already there, but its plying involves more strain.

9. *The Essential Mission of Khadi*: Now to come to the most important point, namely, the prospects of the self-sufficiency programme. With all the corrections in detailed calculations, and improvements in the *khadi* technique, there should be no hesitation in admitting that from the monetary point of view, in view of the competition of mill-cloth, there is, in the immediate present, no adequate inducement either for self-sufficiency or for concentrating upon *khadi* production for wages. The only answer to this is the one given by Gandhiji in *Harijan* of 10th December 1938, which is worth reproducing here:

> "A valued *khadi* worker writes a letter in Hindustani, which freely translated means:
>
> "'Compared to mill cloth *khadi* is not an economic proposition in terms of prices. To compete with mill cloth you have to drop the cost of hand ginning, carding and spinning. Even for self-spinners, therefore, it is not a paying proposition. No doubt you have evolved new economics of *khadi*. But till the people at large appreciate them, *khadi* cannot be universal.'
>
> "There is no doubt that *khadi* cannot compete with mill cloth; it was never meant to. If the people will not understand or appreciate the law governing *khadi*, it will never be universal. It must then remain the fad of moneyed people and cranks. And if it is to be merely that, the labour of a huge organization like the A.I.S.A. must mean a waste of effort, if not something much worse.
>
> "But *khadi* has a big mission. *Khadi* provides dignified labour to the millions who are otherwise idle for nearly four months in the year. Even apart from the remuneration the work brings, it is its own reward. For, if millions live in compulsory idleness, they must die spiritually, mentally and physically. The spinning wheel automatically raises the

status of millions of poor women. Even though, therefore, mill cloth were to be given gratis to the people, their true welfare demands that they should refuse to have it in preference to *khadi*, the product of their labours.

"It is the force of habit which makes us think of *khadi* in terms of prices. We must revise our notion of *khadi* economics. And when we have studied them from the point of view of the national well-being, we shall find that *khadi* is never dear. We must suffer dislocation of domestic economy during the transitional stage. When people, either through State-protection or through voluntary effort, have cultivated the habit of using only *khadi*, they will never think in terms of money, even as millions of vegetarians do not compare the price of flesh foods with those of non-flesh foods even though they may be offered free.

"But I recognize that very few Congressmen have this living faith in *khadi*. The ministers are Congressmen. They derive their inspiration from their surroundings. If they had a living faith in *khadi*, they could do a great deal to popularize it."

HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH

Proceedings

A meeting of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was held in Sevagram under the Presidentship of the Hon'ble Acharya Badrinath Varma, Minister for Education, Bihar, on the 5th and 6th of November. The following points of general interest came before the meeting:

1. The letter of resignation of Dr Zakir Hussain from the Presidentship of the Sangh was read. In the circumstances explained in the letter it was felt that there was no option but to accept the resignation. It was, therefore, regretfully accepted and the Sangh resolved to place on record its deep appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by Dr Zakir Hussain to the cause of *Nai Talim*, first as Chairman of the Committee which put the ideals and principles of *Nai Talim* in terms of educational theory and practice and then as President of this Sangh which has been entrusted with the task of giving effect to those ideals in practice. The Sangh is deeply indebted for the guidance it has always received from him in its most difficult task, and profoundly regrets the breakdown in his health which compels him to cease to act as its President. The Sangh prays that he may be restored to full health and hopes that it may long continue to have the benefit of his mature judgment and wise counsel.

2. The following new members have been elected to the Sangh:
   1. Shri Nanabhai Bhatt
   2. Shri Shrimannarayan Agarwal
   3. Shri Narayan Desai
   4. Smt. Marjorie Sykes

3. The Sangh also decided to hold the next All-India Basic Education Conference at Sevagram in the first week of March, 1951. More particulars about this Conference will be announced at a later date.

Mrs Murphy on Basic Education

Dr and Mrs Murphy, Psychologists of the UNESCO, at present directing researches on Communal Tension and other allied psychological problems, under the Government of India, visited Sevagram on the 1st and 2nd of November. Dr Murphy addressed the Post-graduate Teachers' training students and Mrs Murphy the Post-basic and basic school children and the staff.

Mrs Murphy said:

"Basic Education no longer has to defend or prove its practicality for rural India, or its capacity to improve the material and spiritual well-being of India's village people. What has been done already will be a challenge and inspiration to education all over the world.

"It remains in years ahead for the vital and creative spirit which has led to its present contribution to continue — into new areas, such as urban education and university education, where fresh thinking and solutions as daring as some of these developed here will be required, if the present stereotyped, rigid, stultifying kinds of education all over the world are to be supplanted by education which frees the intrinsic creativeness of young minds."

Sevagram, via Wardha

E. W. ARYANAYAKAM,
Secretary,
Hindustani Talimi Sangh

Shri Mahalakshmi Assam Stall

I have already noted in these columns how sympathy for the victims of the Assam Earthquake has inspired students, teachers and youths in various places to express it in concrete forms. Here is another instance: A young friend of mine, Shri Niranjan Dave, and his comrades in Bombay thought out a plan of availing themselves of the opportunity offered by Diwali and the New Year's Day to organize a collection of contributions from the people to this end. They thought of erecting a temporary stall, designated 'Assam Stall', to receive the collections on the way to the Mahalakshmi temple at Bombay, which is usually visited by mercantile communities on the Diwali and New Year days. As this was to be a purely personal appeal, Shri Niranjan Dave asked me to certify that I approved of his effort. I had no hesitation in doing so, as I could fully trust him. He has now sent me a report of the work. It shows that it was executed with care, accuracy and in an organized manner. The total sum collected is Rs 4,674-7-3. Some seventy young men and women took part in this work as volunteers. A few printing-presses, electric and loud-speaker firms etc., helped Shri Dave with materials for the stall and printing of handbills etc. All such incidental expenses were borne by Shri Niranjan Dave and his friends. The stall opened on the morning of Diwali (9-11-'50) at 8 a.m. and continued without break till 12 midnight on the next day, the New Year's Day (10-11-'50). The public gave a good response. I congratulate Shri Dave and his colleagues for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Wardha, 15-11-'50 K. G. M.

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